



## **Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board of Trustees**

Date: February 10, 2022  
Time: 8:30 AM – 10:00 AM  
Location: Conducted via remote participation

Attendees: Karen Kelleher, Phil Tedesco, Eric Helmuth, Calpurnya Roberts, Jaclyn Pacejo, Neal Mongold, Benjamin Bradlow  
Staff: Jennifer Raitt, Kelly Lynema  
Guests: Ellen Schacter and Hannah Carillo of the City of Somerville, Len Diggins

### **Minutes**

#### **Announcements:**

Karen explained that Mariann had stepped down from the Trust due to personal circumstances. We will move as quickly as possible to appoint a new person: the vacancy will be posted today, and the Select Board will try to make an appointment in the next month's meeting. The seat must be filled by a tenant in income-assisted housing to include on the Trust a member who will be the voice representing tenant issues. Karen has reached out to Jack Nagle of the AHA. Jack and others will help spread the word of the vacancy to help identify a liaison.

As Mariann was also the Secretary, a new Secretary will need to be elected at a future meeting. Kelly will take minutes in the interim.

#### **1. Review and Approve Minutes of January 13, 2022**

Jaclyn made a motion to approve minutes. Neal seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved.

#### **2. Applications, Technical Assistance, and Plans**

##### **CPA Presentation Update**

Phil thanked everyone who attended the CPA presentation. Trustees thanked Karen for leading on the presentation and advocating for the funding and all her work and leadership.

The CPA Committee looked favorably on the presentation and really understood this as the first step in a partnership. We invited a CPA Committee member to coordinate with us. The Trust has requested \$250,000 in CPA funding and has invited the CPA

Committee to put restrictions they want on the funding to make sure it complies with CPA rules.

Karen will follow up with CPA Committee and verify whether Sue Doctrow will be the official liaison. She will invite Sue or the appointed liaison to attend future meetings.

### **Proposed MHP Technical Assistance Application**

The Trust has applied but has not yet received a response. MHP will issue decisions in early February. Karen is reaching out to them today regarding the Action Plan.

### **Action Plan – Consultant RFP Update**

Karen reported that most consultants have indicated that they are too busy right now to take on this work. Phil asked if the timeline is too tight; he wants to make sure we get the right person. Calpurnia asked how long we are willing to wait.

Karen responded that we must figure out how to balance interests: we need to demonstrate a combination of flexibility and action. Losing six months or a year could be problematic.

### **3. Orientation Topic: Housing Corporation of Arlington, Neal Mongold**

Neal gave a presentation on the Housing Corporation of Arlington, discussing the organization's history, evolution, how projects have been funded, services it provides, and portfolio.

Regarding next steps, the HCA is looking for a new executive director; Jeff Katz is currently serving as interim director. HCA is working with Ann Silverman Associates to fill the position and conducting wide outreach.

The HCA is also trying to close out the rent-up portion of DSBI. The first tenants are moving in within a week or two. In the future, they're excited about possibility of doing more development in Arlington. They have looked at property by the Ottoson School and submitted a proposal to St. Athanasius for redevelopment of their vacant rectory. Finally, given the recently passed Accessory Dwelling Unit bylaw, HCA is looking at their two-family properties to see if there is extra space to add or subdivide a unit.

### **Discussion:**

Len asked if there was a scenario where the HCA could build the 900 affordable units necessary for Arlington to reach the 10% threshold if they had the money. Neal shared that over 20 years, HCA has developed 150 units. Development is often driven by how much funding is available, but also by whether they can acquire properties at a reasonable cost.

Adding 900 units involves adding some additional density. A Housing Production Plan is critical to identify where additional units can and should go. Neal mentioned that as architect, he has certain sensibilities about density and infrastructure needed

to support different kinds of development. Jenny added that doing a creative exercise with the Trust to think of three or four paths to adding those affordable housing units would be helpful.

Jaclyn thanked Neal for the Board stepping up to bring projects to completion during HCA's time of transition. She asked about committees within the HCA and their role.

Neal said they have three standing committees and some ad hoc: Finance Committee, Real Estate Development Committee, which looks at development opportunities and helps to oversee capital management, and the Outreach Committee, which organizes the Annual Walk for Housing, Annual meeting, fundraising appeals. They currently have a Transition Committee, which is assisting with leadership search.

#### **4. Transfer Fee Update**

Hannah Carrillo (City of Somerville), Ellen Shachter (City of Somerville, Director of the Office of Housing Stability), and Len Diggins presented on the work of the Transfer Fee Coalition.

Hannah and Ellen are leading the statewide coalition. They've rebranded as the Local Option for Housing Affordability Coalition (LOHAC). They've been leading this effort for several years. There are two pieces being worked on right now:

- Home Rule Petitions: e.g., what was recently passed by Town Meeting.
- Enabling legislation: this is what LOHAC is focused on.

All Home Rule petitions in committee received a favorable report out. Regarding the enabling legislation, they've received an extension through May 9, which is not as favorable, but still good. LOHAC is revamping their outreach efforts.

Ellen provided additional context on enabling legislation. Politically, they recognize that there are nine cities and towns with Home Rule legislation and three considering it. The message from legislation is that because there are so many considering this, it makes sense to advance as statewide legislation. This is important because:

- They've actively working for three years to get this passed. It is time consuming to get Home Rule petitions passed.
- Affordable housing is not a local problem – it's a regional and statewide problem. They want to empower as many municipalities as possible to do this in a way to get this done in a way that makes sense for them. The key is local control over how transfer fees are implemented. For example, Somerville opted to exempt all owner-occupied housing sales from the fee, whereas other cities and towns have a financial threshold for when and how transfer fees are calculated. All are perfectly viable options.
- The statewide legislation would provide autonomy to cities and towns and would only establish a minimum threshold. At present, this would be for sales over the state median sales prices (currently \$529,000), but if county medians

are lower than the state a municipality in that county can use the county's median.

Their aim is to create a floor that gives flexibility to cities and town to do what they want to do and can get political support locally.

Ellen closed by explaining the process for a bill moving through committee: when a bill gets filed, it gets sent to a committee (this bill was sent to the Housing Committee); the committee has a hearing and then sets a deadline for a recommendation (favorable recommendation, go to study (a.k.a. it dies), or gets continued/extended). This session, many of the housing bills were extended.

Eric asked if Home Rule petitions come to a floor vote and whether the governor will support it. Ellen said that a favorable report does not necessarily mean that it will come to the floor for a vote. Favorable means that your bill is part of a smaller group (e.g., 500 bills instead of 5000 bills). After a favorable vote is delivered, you then need to do the work of making it a priority for leadership.

Jenny thanked the coalition for their work. If it hadn't been for our Arlington's Town Counsel and Select Board finalizing home rule language and keep it moving, we wouldn't be in the position we are in today. Local leadership is very important and continuing to regularly check in with our local delegation to keep this moving forward is critical.

Jenny asked Kelly to share the analysis that DPCD did when drafting the Home Rule petition, including how much revenue it could raise in Arlington. Kelly noted that DPCD drafted a memo to the Select Board and the Finance Committee in 2021 (attached), in advance of the warrant article going before Town Meeting. The revenue produced would depend on the threshold or the percentage agreed upon, so at the time the revenue could have ranged from \$225,000 to \$3.2 million.

Ellen noted that sales prices across the greater Boston region have increased significantly over the last 12 months, so this is a good time to advocate for a 0.5% to 2% fee, which is a reasonable one-time fee.

Karen asked LOHAC to stay in touch with the Trust to let members know when and how to advocate for their work. She thanked Ellen, Hannah, Len, and Neal for presenting. Next month, Jack Nagle of the Arlington Housing Authority will be joining the meeting to talk about the work of the AHA, their portfolio, programs, future strategies, and how the AHA and the Trust can work together.

*Meeting adjourned at 10:02am*

**Upcoming Meetings:** March 10, April 14, May 12, June 9, July 14, August 11, September 8, October 13, November 10, December 8